

The Business Purpose of FIS

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Brief Bio

- 5 ½ years in the Coast Guard
- 3 years with State of Alaska – fish ticket data
- 12 years with NMFS Alaska Region – Chief of Inseason Management: Reporting systems, bycatch estimation, catch accounting, quota monitoring, data management, info dissemination
- < 1 year – Chief, Domestic Fisheries Division at NMFS HQ: FMPs and regulations in U.S. waters, expertise in fishery management and regulatory policies

Business Purpose of FIS

... what does that mean?

... an example

- In Alaska, groundfish fisheries are managed with quotas. Fishery data, including industry-reported data and observer data are used to monitor catch and to project when the quota will be reached.
- Accurate and timely management of the fisheries so that the quotas are taken, but not exceeded, is the business purpose.

Fisheries Data often support
multiple business purposes...

Some categories of business purposes...

- Biological
 - stock assessments
- Economic
 - analysis of impacts on small entities; determining net benefits to the nation
- Fisheries management
 - managing TACs; IFQs; bycatch limits
- Enforcement
- Statistical reporting
 - Information for public; national and international reports
- Etc...

The business purpose of FIS will look different, depending on where you sit in the organization

- Regional Office – Science Center
- Field – HQ
- Fishery Manager – Reg Writer -- Analyst

Q: What is the most important
business purpose?

A: The one YOU work on.

Northeast Region

- Summer flounder are no longer overfished and are well on their way to being rebuilt to desired levels. The commercial quotas and recreational harvest limits have increased every year for the past several years, and will likely increase again next year.
- The Atlantic sea scallop resource is at historically high levels and a new program to protect small scallops, while allowing harvest of the largest, most valuable scallops, is being implemented.

Southeast Region

- NOAA Fisheries recently approved an action to end overfishing and rebuild the red grouper resource through a combination of commercial quotas and a recreational bag limit.
- In the South Atlantic, the recently approved Dolphin-Wahoo FMP enhances the agency's efforts to continue the economic and biological sustainability of these important recreational and commercial fisheries. The FMP represents a proactive approach to maintaining healthy stocks of dolphin and wahoo, with action intended to cap the current participation, effort, and landings in the fishery.

Southwest Region

- The rule implementing the FMP for U.S. West Coast Fisheries for Highly Migratory Species addresses issues such as bycatch, essential fish habitat, stock status, and fishery interactions with protected species. Commercial vessels are required to have a gear-specific permit. Recreational vessels are required to have a permit. All commercial and recreational vessels are required to maintain and submit logbook data.

Northwest Region

- NOAA Fisheries completed an industry supported \$46 million groundfish trawl buyback program that reduced the fleet by 35 percent. Over the next 30 years, the remaining groundfish, crab, and shrimp fishermen will repay \$36 million of the buyback program costs through a fee assessed on landings. These remaining fishermen will share more than \$20 million in annual revenues that was previously earned by the buyback vessels.
- NOAA Fisheries implemented a vessel monitoring system in the groundfish fisheries allowing fishing in areas previously closed and greatly enhancing enforcement of fishing regulations. These rockfish conservation areas, in total, range from 10,000 to 15,000 square miles in area.

Alaska Region

- The fisheries in Alaska would rank in the top 10 of seafood producing countries and represent 50% of total U.S. catch. The catch has been between 3 and 5 billion pounds of groundfish annually for the last 28 years. No groundfish are overfished off Alaska.
- Since '94, bycatch in the Alaska groundfish fisheries has been reduced substantively through regulations controlling discard, ongoing rationalization of fisheries, and prohibited species bycatch regulations; for example, Red King crab bycatch down by 61.4%, Opilio crab down by 92.9%, Pollock discard reduced by 80%, Pacific cod discard reduced by 88%.

Pacific Islands Region

- The Hawaii longline swordfish fishery was re-opened early this year, after being closed for three years because of its impact on protected sea turtles. The re-opening of the fishery is the result of new fishing technology (e.g., circle hooks) proven by NOAA Fisheries scientists that significantly reduce sea turtle interactions and mortality by longline gear. Allocates a limited number of shallow-water sets to participants.

Fishery Information is the foundation of much of NMFS work

- Developing and implementing sound fishery management plans
- Protecting health of stocks
- Analyzing economic impacts
- Maximizing benefits to the Nation
- Complying with legal requirements – MSA, NEPA, ESA, etc

Where did our fishery data systems come from?

- Fisheries management imposed on existing commercial activity
- Started collecting data about that activity (landings – amounts and value by species)
- Primary business purpose was to quantify the amounts of fish landed, the participants in the fishery, and the value of the fishery.

The Status Quo

- Fishery-specific data collections (Magnuson Act actually structures data collection authorities by FMP)
- Many separate recordkeeping and reporting regulations, again often by specific FMP

Change is Inevitable

Laws changed – bringing requirements for

- Environmental protection
- Identification of overfished stocks
- Quantification of bycatch
- New levels of economic analysis – protection of communities, impacts on small entities, etc
- Rationalization programs (IFQ, Cooperatives)

Rhetorical Question 1

Have our fishery dependent data collections and data management systems kept up with changing requirements?

Case in point: Bycatch

- Since 1996, Magnuson Act has required all FMPs to have standard methods for determining the quantity of bycatch
- Currently (2004), an effort is underway to document the extent to which our 46 FMPs comply with this requirement
- To quantify total fishing mortality, systems are often devised to estimate bycatch and combine those estimates with landings data – rather than developing a comprehensive system to estimate fishing mortality by species

Rhetorical Question 2

Are our fishery dependent data collections adequate to meet the requirement for...

Ecosystem Management

- NOAA Mission Goal 1: Protect, restore, and manage the use of coastal and oceanic resources through ecosystem-based management
- NMFS Mission: Protect, restore, and manage the use of coastal and oceanic resources through ecosystem-based management

What is Ecosystem Management?

If anyone here knows, please see me afterward...

Some things EM might require

Data covering the complete range of impacts of fishing activity on the ecosystem:

- When and where fishing occurs – in detail
- Mortality of all species, not just ‘target’ or ‘managed’ species
- Impacts of gear on habitat (e.g. precise locations of bottom trawling)
- GIS compatible data on individual hauls or sets

FIS needs to...

- be defined by how it supports the business purposes of the agency.
- actively work with people in the policy and operations parts of the agency
- identify changes in data collections, technologies and data management needed to adequately address the business purposes
- become a budget priority – which will only happen if the business case is clear